

do anything to protect the lives of our fellow countrymen. This is our mission.

I believe every American has a responsibility to America. I don't mean that everyone should join the military. The military life is a hard one, and not a path easily trod. Once my four years are completed, I will more than likely rejoin the ranks of civilians that I work so hard to protect now. However, I have fulfilled at least a part of what I owe America. Everyone has a part to play, be it military, politics, being an activist, or even just helping an elderly neighbor rake their lawn. Each American has a responsibility to every other person in our country. Each of us has a responsibility to every other person in this world. Ani DiFranco wrote "the world owes me nothing, but we owe each other the world." I believe this to be one of the most true statements I've ever heard. We, as a species, could not survive without each other, even though it seems at times that we are hell-bent on destroying ourselves.

I want every person in America to know this: I stand for you. I will take your place in line when the final bell tolls, and I will do it gladly, for I believe that your life is worth it. You are worth every hardship, every effort, and every last breath in my body. I love you. Even if I do not know you, have never seen your face, have never heard your voice, I love you. I do this today and every day for you. So please, do not wave off my gift to you. Don't say you don't want it, just accept that I love you, and will defend you, even if it means my life.

May your life be blessed,

BARBARA MARIE O'REILLY,
OS3 USN.

LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT ACT OF 2001

Mr. SMITH. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about the need for hate crimes legislation. In the last Congress Senator KENNEDY and I introduced the Local Law Enforcement Act, a bill that would add new categories to current hate crimes law, sending a signal that violence of any kind is unacceptable in our society.

I would like to describe a terrible crime that occurred October 9, 2001 in Los Angeles, CA. While a Sikh in traditional clothing was out on an evening walk close to his home, four men attacked, beat, and punched him. The attackers yelled "terrorist" as they beat him.

I believe that Government's first duty is to defend its citizens, to defend them against the harms that come out of hate. The Local Law Enforcement Enhancement Act is a symbol that can become substance. I believe that by passing this legislation and changing current law, we can change hearts and minds as well.

VOTE EXPLANATION

Mr. LIEBERMAN. Mr. President, I unfortunately had to miss the vote yesterday on the nomination of Jeffrey Sutton to serve on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit, but I would like to explain why, had I been here, I would have voted against the nomination.

I take very seriously the Senate's constitutional duty to review Presi-

dential nominees, especially those to the Federal bench. Once confirmed by the Senate, judges have lifetime tenure, meaning that there is no real opportunity to correct poor choices for judicial positions. Given the nature of a judge's job—they hold power not only over the liberty, but in many cases, the lives of those before them—Members of the Senate must be convinced that the nominee is right for the job before offering our consent to their nominations.

This does not mean that we should confirm only those whose views comport precisely or even largely with their own; indeed, the President must be given broad leeway to nominate those who he believes are right for the job, which is why I have supported most of this President's nominees, to the bench or otherwise, regardless of whether I would consider them the best candidates for the job. But the Senate has a constitutional obligation to review, and, when necessary, serve as a check on the President's choices, and when a nominee's views and positions lie far from the mainstream or are so at odds with what I consider to be needed for the job, I must respectfully withhold my consent from their nomination, especially when the stakes are as high as they are for the bench.

After reviewing Mr. Sutton's record, I have concluded that I cannot support his nomination. Although his professional credentials are impressive and I have little doubt that he is a good lawyer, I believe that his legal views lie far out of the mainstream and that his presence on the Federal bench could do serious harm to the values about which our Nation cares deeply, particularly when it comes to our national desire to fight discrimination and protect individual rights. Mr. Sutton has devoted a significant part of his legal career to advancing an extreme vision of federalism that restricts both the power of Congress to pass civil rights laws and the ability of individuals who have been harmed by discriminatory acts of State governments to seek redress. He has used that vision of federalism to convince activist judges to restrict congressional enactments. He has argued against the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act and the Violence Against Women Act. These were laws with strong, mainstream support, and the records justifying them were strong. I have deep concern that when future civil rights and similar laws come before him, he will argue against them on federalism grounds as well. I cannot in good conscience support putting him in a position where he will be able to further restrict these good laws.

VA FINDS FLU SHOTS PROTECT ELDERLY

Mr. GRAHAM of Florida. Mr. President, throughout its history, the Department of Veterans Affairs, VA, has

made great strides in medical research. At a time when VA's medical and prosthetic research program is being starved of vital funding, as ranking member of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, I would like to draw attention to a significant discovery the program recently has made.

As highlighted in an April 22, 2003, article in The Washington Post, researchers at the Minneapolis VA Medical Center found that not only do seniors who get vaccinated against the flu gain protection from the disease, but they also reduce their risk of hospitalization from pneumonia, cardiac disease and stroke. The VA study, published in the April 3, 2003, issue of The New England Journal of Medicine, also found that during a given flu season, vaccinated elderly patients were half as likely to die as their unvaccinated peers.

Since its inception, the VA research program has made landmark contributions to the well-being of veterans and the Nation as a whole. Past VA research projects have resulted in the first successful kidney transplant performed in the U.S., as well as the development of the cardiac pacemaker, a vaccine for hepatitis, and the CAT and MRI scans. This new discovery is yet another example of the crucial research work done by the VA, and of why we must keep the research program sufficiently funded.

I ask unanimous consent that the article from The Washington Post highlighting the VA research study on the benefits of the flu vaccine be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Washington Post, Apr. 22, 2003]

FLU SHOTS SAVE LIVES

(By Jennifer Huget and Associated Press)

Seniors who get vaccinated against the flu not only protect themselves from that deadly disease but also reduce their risk of hospitalization for pneumonia, cardiac disease and stroke. Plus, a study in the April 3 issue of the New England Journal of Medicine shows, vaccinated elderly patients were half as likely to die as their unvaccinated peers during a given flu season.

The study, conducted by the Department of Veterans Affairs at the Minneapolis VA Medical Center, tracked 286,000 men and women age 65 and over through two flu seasons. Although the vaccinated folks were on average older and in worse overall health than the unvaccinated, they were about a third less likely to have pneumonia and about a fifth less likely to be hospitalized for cardiac care or suffer a stroke during the flu season.

Influenza kills about 36,000 people of all ages each year, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC); about 90 percent of those deaths are among the elderly. Yet the CDC says that only 63 percent of those over age 65 got flu shots in 2001. Flu shots confer benefits for one flu season only. Since this year's flu season is now winding down, experts suggest that seniors start seeking new shots in October.

IDEA FULL FUNDING

Mr. ROBERTS. Mr. President, today I am proud to cosponsor the Hagel